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AGAWAM

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Mayor, superintendent address COVID concerns

By Shelby Macri
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AGAWAM - Superintendent of Schools Shelia Hoffman this week addressed concerns of COVID-19 cases and procedures in the Agawam Public Schools.

The schools currently offer both hybrid and full remote learning options. Hoffman says the school district is working to provide a safe in-person learning experience during this time.

There are also options to switch to remote learning immediately. If a student is currently doing hybrid classes, they can

easily switch to remote. If that student decides they want to return to hybrid learning, a parent must notify the school ahead of time to allow the classes to adjust to having another in-person learner. At each term, the schools will allow students to return to the building. The early childhood and elementary schools have three terms while Doering, the Junior High, and the high school have four terms.

About 75 percent of the student population is utilizing hybrid learning with only about 25 percent fully remote.

Students at the junior high

and high school levels raise the remote numbers as they are more independent in their learning. Though the high school makes up about 40 percent of the hybrid numbers. The schools all prepare for additions in class sizes, mask protocols, the amount of mask breaks and the six-foot social distance guidance.

Each school is deep cleaned and disinfected every night of the week, and the custodial crew informed Hoffman that the deep clean is a part of their nightly procedure. The crew can focus on extra projects on Wednesdays when

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Mayor William Sapelli SUBMITTED PHOTOS



Interim Superintendent Sheila Hoffman

Crocodile rocks virtual 'Festival of Trees'



"Christmas Crocodile Rock" was the theme of the fourth submission made by the Bard family in conjunction with their EvvGirl Foundation. The Foundation is honor of Evan Bard, an Agawam resident who was killed in a tragic accident nine years ago. The tree will be bid on during the virtual Festival of Trees held by the Greater Springfield Boys & Girls Club. SUBMITTED PHOTO

High school updates program of studies

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM - The coronavirus pandemic and keeping students safe continues to be the hottest topic in the Agawam Public Schools and there is no shortage of teachers, parents, and officials with opinions about how school and town officials are handling.

At the Nov. 24 school committee meeting, which preceded the Thanksgiving holiday, the topic re-surfaced as an overall rise in cases did resurface, but other topics were brought forward as well as the school district attempts to look toward normalcy.

Agawam High School Principal

Thomas Schnepf was on hand to talk about the updated program of studies that would be used for the 2021-2022 school year.

Schnepf highlighted some of the small changes to the program, which included updates of the duties of school counselors.

"Counselors have taken on a lot more duties in terms of guiding students through the school year," said Schnepf. "It's much more than just career and college planning. There is more social and emotional development."

Updates were also made to the models of student requirements for graduations, as well as explaining the school's weighted

grading system.

He said there are updates and expanded information about the school's career center. He said the pandemic hurt the ability to send more students into workplaces due to the fact students who took internships in the school system were not allowed to go into classrooms. This was due to keeping capacities in classrooms down to a minimum.

Schnepf said he hopes to see more internships take place during the next school year.

He discussed a public speaking course, mentioning that there were two different groupings, one for ninth and 10th graders, and

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Public health nurse answers questions during mayor's update

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM - On Monday, following the Thanksgiving holiday, Mayor William Sapelli gave an overall community update.

His update, which is available to view online on the town's website, included the interim school superintendent.

The Town's nurse, Sherry Petrucci, has been working with the health department.

Petrucci discussed the state's website and how public health nurses like herself utilize the website.

All testing sites in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are required to report results of individual COVID-19 testing to the website. Those test results are also disseminated to the communities that a person tested is from.

"The public health nurse is able to have access to all this information," said Pertucci. "(For a person who is tested) it includes their name and address and where and when they got tested. It gives us a framework for contact tracing."

Once the public health nurse is in possession of the information, they are then able to contact the individual or individuals who

have been tested and can question that individual about where they have been and who they have been in contact with. These questions can allow the town to conduct proper contact tracing so other individuals who may be at high risk to contract COVID-19 can also be tested, quarantine, or both depending on the level of exposure they may have received.

"We identify where they were and what they do for work," said Petrucci. "We then ask who they have been in contact with or if they have been to any large events so we can identify all possible

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New preschool accepting applications

AGAWAM – Agawam’s newest preschool is open at St John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Parish, Agawam for children aged 2 years 9 months to Kindergarten ready. Applications are currently being accepted at the parish center by appointment. The school is open between the hours of 7 a.m. and 5 p.m., with full-time and part-time schedules available.

“Our first weeks of school have been so wonderful,” says Claire Riberdy, Director. “The school has been fully approved by our city, encouraged by the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Springfield, and licensed by the state of Massa-

chusetts and we are ready to expand our care to more students.”

St John’s has worked diligently to create a fun, safe, and caring environment to nurture children and prepare them for Kindergarten and is pleased to offer this childcare option for families of Agawam and beyond. Many people have poured their heart into this preschool and we are excited to provide the highest quality of child care to our families, to prepare the children for Kindergarten and to lay foundations in their heart, mind, and soul.

Social distancing, single-use supplies, regular

hand-washing, and continual deep-cleaning of the facility are carried out, as well as a complete sanitizing each night. Toys, as well as materials for play and lessons, will be prepared for each child to use individually. St John’s endeavors to ensure our children’s safety throughout this pandemic.

More information can be found on our website: StJohnAgawam.com, or call the Director, Claire Riberdy, at 786-8105 to schedule an appointment.

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school is fully remote for all students, rather than only deep cleaning on that day.

“We talked a lot about the deep clean schedule and the custodial crew said that they were able to do a deep clean every night, and that’s the priority,” Hoffman said. “Safety and health comes first, we’re trying to provide the best in-person learning we can.”

Hoffman works closely with the Board of Health so they can corroborate on case numbers and further actions. The school looks beyond the district, as many teachers and some students travel from other towns. Hoffman is on lookout for these out of town cases as well, and will update the Board of Health whenever she has information.

“When I hear word of a positive case, I tell the health department, no matter the time,” Hoffman said. “If it’s day, night, weekends, it doesn’t matter, they know when I know.”

This information is also included in the schools’ active case counter. Keeping in mind that there are more people than the community immediately involved, and when they know about cases the schools contact those in close contact and require a quarantine before returning.

If the case also involves residents the school will contact them and the Board of Health will contact them, some people may receive information twice. The town doesn’t notify the whole community because it involves the medical records of others, when they notify close contacts they mention that a positive case was found. There are guidelines that the schools have to follow from the State and from the local Board of Health, they make contact with those they need to.

Additionally there are guidelines regarding testing as

they can’t make a family be tested, though they advise and strongly encourage families, students, and staff members to be tested if they feel symptoms or if they are a close contact.

Mayor William Sapelli said close contact cases should quarantine for a few days before getting tested, to avoid a false negative. “

The virus takes a few days to develop and became evident, the Board of Health advises to wait five days before getting tested,” Sapelli said. “After five days it’s fairly safe that the results will be correct, we’re not asking people not to get tested we’re just asking for them to wait before they do.”

The schools follow state regulations for quarantines, and requests that all cases quarantine, especially if they choose not to be tested.

“I’d like to emphasize that we’re trying to do in-person learning in a safe way, and I’m working with the Board of Health to find cluster in the schools,” Hoffman said. “There seem to be none, there are isolated cases and our procedures are working. We’re cautious and we’re looking at the data carefully.”

Both Hoffman and Sapelli understand there are opposing opinions within the community and school district. They hear all sides but they are following the guidelines set forth and focusing on the safety of the students.

The schools watch the data come in and are capable of shutting down a problematic area when needed. With the new guidelines set in place with the teachers union, the schools are able to notify staff and students better when the district does a two-week shutdown. Also, schools can isolate instances and shut down a school and recently a

classroom. The classroom was at a high risk though there were no positive cases, so there is a two-week quarantine for that classroom, this is a part of the new guidelines set forth.

“We’re very fortunate for the unions help and working with us for the best options for students,” Hoffman said.

Sapelli knows there are residents who feel that the schools should not be open at all, though he feels that there is no reason to keep others from an education if they feel safe going to school.

Remote learning is continually offered to students, staff, and families who feel unsafe in-person, though other students deserve to have the option to be in hybrid classes.

“When we need to shut down we will,” Sapelli said. “We have already shut down the district when needed. If we need to step in and shutdown we will. We proved this before and we will continue to prove this. We are watching the numbers carefully.”

The town provides COVID-19 information and case numbers on the town website. They provide data and break it down into many sections like risk area, ages, and more.

“We’re being honest and open about the numbers,” Sapelli said. “It shows currently positive cases, and today there were seven cases in schools with four of those cases being people who are completely remote.”

These numbers include those who aren’t in schools just as much as those in schools, the town and the schools are working together to provide information to the community. Sapelli explains that the numbers in schools are low, and school will continue as long as it’s safe.

If it’s not safe, Sapelli and Hoffman will deal with the schools accordingly.

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Holiday ‘take-out’ supper planned

AGAWAM – A very special curb-side Holiday Take-Out Supper will be held at Agawam Congregational Church on Friday, Dec. 11 starting at 4:30 p.m.

The fully-cooked supper, catered by Partners Restaurant, will include salad, baked chicken, a vegetable, and mashed potato with gravy. Additionally, outdoor entertainment by young vocalist Alexis and free Christmas Mazes activity booklets will be included, according to ACC Supper Club chair and church member Roberta Page. The suppers can be heated microwave or stove top.

This is a first for the church to have a supper “served” so uniquely by masked church members outside, Page said. But,

during this COVID-19 situation, it is a way for the church to make some money and folks to have a yummy supper from Partners, she continued.

Ticket holders will guide their vehicles through the parking lot with placed cones. If vehicles’ windows are open, folks will hear holiday songs, especially, selected and sung by Alexis who will be under the back portico of the church.

Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased by calling the church at 413-786-7111. The deadline for reservations is Wednesday, Dec. 9 at 12 noon. No exceptions. All are invited to come and enjoy this unique ACC Supper Club event.

Bethany to host ‘drive-thru’ holiday event

AGAWAM – Looking for a fun and safe activity this Christmas season? We have just the event for you! Please join us as we host “A Bethany Christmas”, a narrated drive-thru Christmas experience! The drive-thru will contain displays, characters, carolers and thousands of lights, as well as live scenes, sharing a message of hope and faith. This drive-thru event is our gift to the community and is free to the public, but

we will be accepting donations which will be used to build schools for children in Latin America. The dates of the event are the first two weekends in December: Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, Dec. 4, 5 and 6, and 11, 12, and 13. The times are Friday from 6pm – 8pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. We hope you’ll join us for A Bethany Christmas at Bethany Assembly of God, 580 Main Street, Agawam, MA.

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contacts. We then inform them they are to quarantine for 14 days.”

Sapelli asked Petrucci to explain the proper way of a direct contact being tested because of the possibility of false negatives.

Petrucci said anyone who is identified as a direct contact should be tested immediately.

“Incubation period for COVID-19 is two to 14 days once you have direct exposure,” said Petrucci. “We tell people to wait anywhere from two to five days to be tested because the virus cannot be detected before that.”

Anyone who tests sooner, should fol-

low-up with an additional test five days after the first one.

Sapelli also asked Petrucci to explain the difference between isolation and quarantine.

“Isolation means you are away from other people because you are identified as a positive case for 10 days,” said Petrucci. “Ideally, you are in a separate room in your house away from other people and have own facilities.”

Quarantine means you are identified as a close contact and you have to stay away from others for 14 days. Quarantined individuals should be tested.

Grant deadline approaching soon

AGAWAM – With a mandate to distribute state monies via a grants process, the Agawam Cultural Council is seeking grant requests from local community-oriented programs in arts, humanities and sciences in need of funding. The Agawam Cultural Council FY2021 grant season started Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020 and has been extended to Monday, Dec. 14, 2020 as the post-mark deadline for organizations, schools and individuals to apply for grants that may support or provide cultural activities for the Agawam community. According to Council spokesperson Bob Kadis, these grants can support a variety of artistic projects and activities in Agawam -- including exhibits, festivals, short-term artist residencies or performances in the schools, workshops, lectures or historical interpretation.

Notably, the Council also encourages funding requests from schools and youth groups to cover ticket and transportation costs for field trips for school-age children.

For more information, Local Guidelines and FAQ’s can be found at this site: <http://www.mass-culture.org/Agawam> by clicking on the “Council Priorities” tab.

Information about the ACC’s Grants program can also be found on the ACC’s own website at: agawamcc.org.

The FY2021 allocation amount has not been determined as of this writing. But what we do know there is \$3,300 of unencumbered funds left over from the FY2020 grant season. The MCC FY2021 allocation plus the unencumbered funds will make up the total grant amount for FY2021. The total grant amount will be posted on our website when we know it. Note, the MCC FY2020 allocation was \$17,200.00 and when added to the FY2019 \$615.00 unencumbered funds made for an available total grant amount of \$17,815.00 for FY2020.

If you have questions about the online application process, you may contact the Massachusetts Cultural Council’s Lisa Simmons at 617-858-2707 or at lisa.simmons@state.ma.us -- or ACC chair Bob Kadis, at 413-789-4814 or at r.kadis@comcast.net.

An online application process will become available Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020. The Agawam Cultural Council will not accept paper applications. To apply for a grant, please visit: <http://www.mass-culture.org/Agawam> and click “Apply Now.”

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another for 11th and 12th graders.

“We were finding we just don’t have the numbers, so we have combined it to just one public speaking,” said Schnepf. “It has kind of worked out because the seniors are able to mentor the ninth graders. We had worried the ninth graders would be more intimidated, but found that seniors took them under their wing.”

Schnepf said an English-Language Arts Essentials course has been removed.

“We found it was a remedial reading course,” said Schnepf. “We found in a normal year that ninth grade students already have an English, math, and social studies, adding the ELA Essentials just puts them

straight out academically. We thought we would give students an opportunity to get into something (an elective) they really like. Like something hands on.”

Schnepf said a health care career center pathway is something that has been discussed for a long time, and he is looking to offer a second-year course in human anatomy for students looking into that career path.

School committee members were complimentary toward the updates, especially the elaboration of the guidance duties and updated information charts to make things easier for students and parents to understand.



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Now Accepting Applications for the following “In-Demand” Career Training Programs in Hampden County:



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Classes are filling quickly!

For more information please visit www.massshirecwb.com and locate the program you are interested in under the “What’s New” section.

For more information please contact: Joanne Lyons
Jlyons@massshirecwb.com




Help Us Help the Homeless


During this season of giving, we are asking for your help in supporting our local homeless population. We are collecting needed items for Jenna’s Blessing Bags through Thursday, December 31.

As an added incentive, if you bring a minimum of 10 items to either of our locations, we’ll give you **10% off** your materials purchased* that day. All items collected will be added to Jenna’s Blessing Bags for distribution locally.

Find more information and a list of needed items on our website.

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Opinion

OUR VIEW

We can control ourselves

This week's front page story is motivated by a "letter to the editor" from Connor Kelley, which can be viewed on this page.

Kelley makes a number of assertions and also accusations against the town and schools of ignoring data and its handling of COVID-19 in the schools. There are also a number of people in Agawam who share his opinion and believe the schools should be taking much stricter measures to keep students and by contact, the community-at-large, safe. This could include closing down and doing full remote learning for all until the pandemic ends.

Throughout the past few months, the criticism has increased as the second surge rages on.

Here in Agawam, as of Monday's report, there are 931 reported cases. The numbers of cases are rising much like the rest of the state, but targeting the schools and their handling of the virus is a bit misguided.

In our front page story, Sapelli reports there are just seven cases among students, four of whom are involved in full remote learning.

While the protocols may not require a negative COVID-test for a sick student or staff member to return to school, those that don't test must remain out of school for 14 days. So far, it does not appear any outbreaks in town are associated with the in-person component of learning at schools.

There is not a perfect way to react to the coronavirus pandemic unless every person were to be locked in their home for two months. That's just not possible.

We also live in a country where people have certain rights and freedoms. We cannot, and neither can the schools, force students and their families to be tested. We also cannot stop people, even those who are supposed to quarantine or isolate, from walking out of their houses, getting in the car, and going to the grocery store or the gas station, or the park. We do not have the personnel or enforcement authority to do those things.

Additionally, those that continue to write in to or call the Agawam public schools and make criticisms have the ability to bring their children home to learn instead of having them be in school. If you are unhappy with how hybrid learning is being conducted, you literally can have your child start remote learning the next day. If others feel it is safe to send their children to school, then that is their choice.

And yes, things are not great with a large rise in cases, but our leaders and officials are doing the best they can with the information and guidance provided by the state. I do not envy Mayor Sapelli, Superintendent Hoffman, the school committee, or the health department. They are all in impossible situations dealing with an unprecedented situation the very best they can. They are trying to balance public health with education, public safety, mental and emotional health, and keeping a working economy going. There are no winners in this situation.

Criticizing our leaders during this emergency is not helpful. Focusing on ourselves and the choices we make is a much more productive use of our time.

Keep trips out of the house to a minimum, make sure your mask is on, socially distance, sanitize, and limit your contact with others. Utilize takeout or contactless delivery if you want to eat out for a night. And do these things not because the governor orders you to, but because it is what is best for your personal health and safety. For the most part, we, as individuals, can keep ourselves and our families from catching the coronavirus by doing these things. We can all control ourselves and our actions.

We cannot control the actions of others, and at the end of the day, others have to deal with the consequences of their choices if they catch COVID-19 and get very sick.



Letter to the Editor

School district not handling COVID protocols correctly

Dear Editor,

A number of Agawam citizens are growing more and more concerned about our administration's handling of COVID-19 in schools. I've reached out to the mayor and the superintendent on and off for months, and I've been ignored every time. Frustrated, I shared my concerns with the school committee, only to watch the mayor shut down the conversation when one member spoke up at the last meeting.

In our district, a close contact is defined as someone who's been within less than 6 feet of a confirmed COVID case for 15 minutes. The problem with this criteria is that unless a person with symptoms gets tested, no one they interacted with is considered a close contact. In Agawam, testing is optional and left up to the individual with symptoms. So if they are carrying the virus and choose not to get tested, they can just quarantine until they "feel better" and no one in danger would ever be notified.

Additionally, the district defines close contacts with the assumption that everyone is rigidly

adhering to the 6 foot distance protocol at all times (which, in reality, they are NOT), so essentially no one ever qualifies as a close contact, even if they've spent all day with an infected person. If only positive tests trigger contact tracing, then every student or staff member with symptoms should have to prove - not just claim - a negative test before being allowed back into their building.

Leaving testing up to individual discretion also creates a huge gap in safety where asymptomatic individuals can be present in any school, spreading the virus, without any action being taken. The CDC has stated that most COVID infections are spread by those with no symptoms.

A scientific review of 16 different studies estimated 45% of infections are asymptomatic. The W.H.O has stated they could account for 80%. Yet another study involving CDC members estimated that documented case numbers might only account for 1 of 10 actual infections. When only a small fraction of the school body is being tested, it makes perfect sense that case

numbers look insignificant on paper.

The district keeps pointing to low documented numbers and we keep pointing to a growing body of scientific evidence that indicates the numbers on paper aren't telling the whole story. Their information is not adequate for making life and death decisions. This isn't a conspiracy theory from the dark corners of the internet; the CDC recently elevated in-person learning to the "high-risk" category. Our school administration has continuously disregarded data provided by the most credible health organizations on the planet, but somehow following the CDC's advice means you've got an agenda?

Nobody is happy that education has taken a hit to keep people safe, but until our administration addresses the limitations of their approach, we cannot accept on blind faith that they are doing all they can to protect our community when lives hang in the balance.

Sincerely,
Connor Kelley

It's time to shop for a gardener in your life

My kids have been busy making their Christmas wish lists. Over the years I have saved the "rough drafts." You know, the list that doesn't get sent to Santa. It's a walk down Memory Lane to look these over. Just the change in their handwriting is enough to make a Momma cry, never mind all the requests for baby dolls and princess this or that! Those days are over, snuffle, snuffle...but today's pastime got me thinking about my favorite gift recommendations for the gardener in your life. Let's start with tools!

Hands down, my favorite tool is the spade. It's similar to a short handled shovel with an ever so slightly tapered, yet straight rectangular blade. I have an antique spade with a worn wooden handle that belonged to my dad. I use it to "edge" shrub beds or other gardens to keep them distinct from the lawn. A spade is also great for dividing overgrown perennials. Simply use the blade to chop the plant into manageable pieces. It is likewise indispensable for moving or removing trees and shrubs, cutting through tough roots in no time flat.

If I had to name a runner up, it would be the scuffle hoe. Get your friend one of these and with

20 minutes of "aerobic exercise" three times a week, their garden will be weed free! A gentle back and forth action slices the weeds at the soil line without turning the soil over too much or bringing new seeds to light.

One tool that I couldn't live without come harvest time are my garden shears. They look very much like scissors with short-er blades. Useful as an all around pruner, this tool is surprisingly sharp, lightweight, and comfortable in your hands even after lots of work. I only wish they weren't black; I need to spray paint the handles neon orange so that I don't keep losing them amongst the plant material.

Once the weather breaks your favorite gardener can get a jump start on the growing season with a gift of IRT mulch. For crops such as pumpkins, melons, eggplant, peppers and other heat-lovers, it is an indispensable tool. Simply roll out the black plastic-like mulch two weeks before planting time to warm the soil. When ready to plant, simply cut and "X" into the mulch and position the seedling into the soil. Plants generally grow faster and will ripen sooner than those growing without the mulch. In

IN THE GARDEN



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Rotary club holding gift auction

AGAWAM – If you could get great gifts, save money doing it, while helping your community, would you do it? We would certainly hope to. And we want to give you that opportunity.

The Agawam Rotary Club will be holding an online Holiday Gift Auction from Dec. 4 to 13. What kinds of items will be auctioned off? There will be gift certificates to a number of area restaurants. A Callaway standing golf bag. An Amazon gift card. A one-hour massage certificate. A foursome, with carts, at Agawam Municipal Golf Course. And much more. This is only the tip of the iceberg.

How does this help our community? First, it promotes local business. (If you have a business that you want us to promote through the auction, we are accepting additional auction items valued at \$50.00 or more)

It also supports the Agawam Rotary Club, which in turn supports many local endeavors, including offering 5 scholarships, totaling \$7,000 to local individuals pursuing higher education. The club provided food for the Parish Cupboard and PPE masks for our frontline workers. We supported and hosted the Virtual Toy Exchange of the Zero Waste Club. We provide financial and other support to the Salvation Army, Junior Achievement, Agawam Robotics Education Association. And our big project for this year was providing over 100 “Comfort Kits” of stress relief and calming items for use by our students in these trying times.

Couple the benefits that your purchase at the online Agawam Rotary Club online Holiday Gift Auction can do with the possibility of scoring some bargains, and you truly have a win/win situation.

The Agawam Rotary Club is part of Rotary International. Our motto is Service Above Self. For more information about the auction or Agawam Rotary, check out the website – agawamrotary.org – or email John Barber, President, at chhengraving@cs.com

GARDEN ■ from page 4

addition, they suffer next to nil competition from weeds.

Even though it will be a while until we can get our hands into the soil again, many gardeners will start off the New Year with a seed catalog or two in hand. To be able to grow the great variety of tasty veggies and colorful flowers seen on the glossy pages of these pamphlets, we really must learn to start our own transplants from seed. Then, the sky is really the limit!

Without the right amount of light and warmth, however, indoor seed starting can be discouraging. Often times transplants end up so leggy that they collapse. Or, worse yet, seeds rot in the soil without ever even germinating. Spare your loved one the heartbreak and get them a heated mat and a shop light with fluorescent bulbs. The mat will provide warmth at the root zone to encourage speedy, even germination and the light, when positioned just inches above the growing seedlings, will promote sturdy, strong growth.

Search out local garden centers and nurseries for these and other innovative gardening implements for your friends and family this holiday season. Two mail order companies that carry the some of the products I mentioned include Johnny’s Selected Seeds in Winslow, Maine (Johnnyseeds.com) and Fedco Seeds in Waterville Maine (fedcoseeds.com).

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to ekennedy@turley.com with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.

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Cancer House to hold luminaria

WEST SPRINGFIELD – The Center for Human Development (CHD) Cancer House of Hope will host its annual Luminaria event this year on the West Springfield Town Common on Tuesday, Dec. 8, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

During the event, hundreds of luminary bags dedicated to friends and loved ones impacted by cancer will light the pathway in celebration of their lives while also creating a sense of beauty, inspiration, community and hope. Honoring both those who’ve been lost to cancer and those who continue to walk along their cancer journeys, the Luminaria serves to share messages both in loving memory and in affirmation of one’s ongoing battle.

The cost to dedicate a single bag is \$10 each. In addition to the sale of luminary bags, the event will also feature a new “Luminaria-At-Home Kit” this year for \$20. The Kit will afford participants the opportunity to light a candle from the comfort of home and includes a special keepsake candle holder. Those who wish to dedicate a bag or purchase a Luminaria At Home Kit can visit chd.org/luminaria. To help ensure all bags are accounted for, participants are asked to submit their dedication by Friday, December 4.

All proceeds from the event will help the Cancer House of Hope provide counseling support, healing therapies and wellness programs to all in our community newly diagnosed, going through treatment or stepping out into recovery. The Cancer House of Hope has been able to adapt over 90% of services virtually though the pandemic and even expand some service offerings during this time, including car-side wig consult and fitting services to virtual yoga classes, crisis counseling by phone and much more.

“The generosity we’ve seen from the community during this especially difficult time has just been remarkable,” said Program Director Margaret Toomey. “Each contribution to Cancer House of Hope truly helps provide life changing support to anyone who comes to us during their journey,



A luminaria event will be held on Dec. 8 in West Springfield. SUBMITTED PHOTO

and it has an especially big impact during COVID-19. In adapting services, we’ve been able to ensure our community can safely access these therapies while also staying connected to one another, or forming new bonds.”

For those planning to attend the Luminaria, candles will be lit by 6 p.m. and the Luminaria will be on display until 8 p.m. The event is free and open to the public, and will offer complimentary hot chocolate.

Parking is available at the West Springfield Senior Center located at 128 Park St. The spaces located directly adjacent to the Town Common will be reserved for those needing special accommodations and accessibility.

Attendees are kindly asked to wear a face covering and respect social distancing while walking through the event. Foot traffic will be one way on the path through the display.

For all inquiries about Luminaria and the Cancer House of Hope, please visit chd.org/luminaria or contact Cancer House of Hope at 413-733-1858.

Feline Friends in need of pet food

AGAWAM – Feline Friends Inc. Cat Sanctuary of Feeding Hills, MA will be holding a food/supply drive at Dave’s Soda & Pet City on Saturday, Dec. 12, 2020 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Volunteers will be accepting food, litter, treats & monetary donations for our kitties.

Feline Friends Inc. is a community- based, nonprofit cat sanctuary that does not euthanize or discriminate against any cat based on age, gender or disability.

For every \$5 donation in cash or food/treat/litter donation, those donating will receive a raffle ticket for our “Good-bye 2020” basket. The winner will be drawn from the entries on that date, Dec. 12.

Dave’s Soda and Pet City, a valued sponsor, is fully stocked with Friskies Pate or Shreds canned food (single flavored cases preferred), Purina Cat Chow Indoor dry food (green bag), Unscented cat litter and Temptations cat treats. All donations are gratefully accepted.

More information about our sanctuary may be found on our website at felinefriendsinc.org or our Facebook page at Feline Friends Cat Sanctuary. Contact us with questions at info@felinefriendsinc.org or by phone at 413-786-5019.

Grange holding Holiday Bazaar

AGAWAM – Community Grange #382 of Feeding Hills will hold their Annual Holiday Bazaar on Saturday, Dec. 12 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Grange Hall located at 47 North West Street in Feeding Hills. All proceeds will benefit the building fund and the public is invited to attend. Please wear a mask and practice social distancing. Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes will be available.

Adoration service back at St. John

AGAWAM – All are welcome and invited to join us at St. John the Evangelist Church, 833 Main Street, for Eucharistic Adoration, Wednesdays, 12 noon to 5:45 p.m. with Holy Mass at 6:00 p.m. Come and spend some time in quiet prayer with our Lord Jesus Christ, present in the Eucharist.

Positions open for ZBA

AGAWAM – Please be advised that there are two openings on the Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals effective January 2021. The openings are for one regular position and one alternate position. Interested parties should contact Barbara Bard in the City Council Office at 726-9716 or send in a letter of interest to bbard@agawam.ma.us by Dec. 14, 2020.

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Six Flags planning holiday event

AGAWAM – The most wonderful time of the year kicks off on select nights starting November 27 with Holiday in the Park Lights!

We will be open from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Holiday in the Park Lights will feature a one-way path with more than one million dazzling lights, beautifully adorned Christmas trees and an extraordinary synchronized light display.

Holiday in the Park Lights jingles weekends and select days this holiday season and reservations are required! All guests will review our enhanced safety opening procedures while making their reservations online.

While the property’s world-class rides and attractions will remain closed for the 2020 season, Six Flags New England is thrilled to welcome guests back to the park and warm their hearts this holiday season on this whimsical light trail that is over one mile long!

Tickets are only \$19.99 or free of charge to Members and Season Pass Holders

Holiday in the Park Lights is free of charge to all Members and Season Pass holders. Or enjoy single-day tickets for \$19.99.

We are following direction from the CDC and local officials and are operating at a limited capacity. It’s very important that you make an advance reservation; failure to do so will deny entry to the park.

Simply click the link below and follow these steps:

Find your park
Select your ticket
Be sure to purchase parking (as it won’t be available to purchase at the park. Members and Pass holders with free parking are all set)
Select your date and time
Checkout and you’re done.

We are so excited to see you and appreciate your cooperation as we regulate new protocols during these times.



There will be Lights in the Parks beginning Nov. 27.



Six Flags normally has a holiday event, but it will be modified this year due to the pandemic. SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Help a friend through ‘wish box’

AGAWAM – This has been a challenging year for so many. With the pandemic, loss of jobs, health concerns and isolation, many are struggling just to make ends meet. If you know someone that may need a little help this holiday season, please submit a request to the e-mail address below, identifying their hardship and need. We will be granting three wishes this holiday season to spread goodwill and provide them with some relief during a very trying time. Perhaps it is a rent payment they are coming up short, a heating bill, food for the holidays, gifts for the children. All entries need to be submitted by Dec. 20. Once all entries are received, we will reach out to you for their contact information to provide them assistance. Please e-mail your request to: wishbox33@gmail.com.

Juried photography show announced

AGAWAM – The Friends of the Agawam Public Library are very excited to announce their First Open Juried Virtual Photography Show. We are not able to have our annual show at the library, but we want to continue to share the outstanding work of area photographers. The show benefits the Agawam Public Library and provides a platform to recognize and encourage these photographers. Awards totaling \$1340 will be determined by judging done on January 13. Amy S. Dane and Barbara Krawczyk, both well recognized photographers, will be the judges.

The show is divided into four categories of photography: creative, nature, photojournalism and pictorial. The entry fee is \$25 per entry up to and including November 30, 2020. Starting December 1, the fee will be \$30. If we have not received sufficient entries by January 1, 2021, the show will be cancelled and all fees returned.

All images must be original, made by the photographer, captured by film or digitally, and cannot be previous entries in our show. For the show’s Prospectus and Entry Form, please visit www.agawamlibrary.org/about/friends. For further information please contact Bob Kadis at r.kadis@comcast.net or at 413-789-4814.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Opposite of west
5. ___ Caesar, comedian
8. Helps little firms
11. A way to censor
13. Expresses atomic and molecular weights
14. Chalcedony
15. Type of sword
16. A corporation's first offer to sell stock to the public
17. Attired
18. A sequence of winding turns
20. Pal
21. Expresses pleasure
22. Amendable
25. Clear
30. A way to cut off
31. Indigenous Thai person
32. Pale brownish yellow color
33. Aquatic plants genus
38. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!

41. Merchants
43. Fix a chair
45. Throws into disorganization
48. Famed German composer
49. Keyboard key
50. Oral polio vaccine developer
55. Partner to pain
56. Where golfers start
57. Jenny ___; weight loss program
59. Sailing dinghy
60. Suffix that forms adjectives
61. Speeds at which music is played
62. Body part
63. Fall back
64. Ancient Greek sophist

CLUES DOWN

1. One point south of due east

2. Wings
3. One point south of southeast
4. The shirts on our backs
5. One who works on the seas
6. Select jury
7. Small intestines parts
8. Plant of the heath family
9. Extrasolar planet
10. Creates more of
12. Before
14. Forms over a cut
19. Runs down
23. Exercise regimen ___-bo
24. Unkeyed
25. Principle underlying the universe
26. Corpuscle count (abbr.)
27. Residue
28. Company that rings receipts
29. Rugged mountain range

34. Commercials
35. NY footballer
36. They ___
37. Soviet Socialist Republic
39. Poked holes in the ground
40. Pitchers
41. Your
42. Diana ___, singer
44. Important document for inventors
45. Bangladesh capital
46. Fluid that flows in the veins of Greek gods
47. Famed daguerreotype photographer
48. Where military personnel work
51. Play a role
52. La ___ Tar Pits, Hollywood
53. Unstressed-stressed
54. Type of palm tree
58. Judo garments

Writing contest deadline extended

AGAWAM – The Agawam Cultural Council is sponsoring a writing competition for all Agawam Public School students. The topic is “Facing the Challenges of the Coronavirus - How did you do it?” Entries will be accepted from October 15, 2020 through December 31, 2020, and the winners will be chosen by members of the Agawam Cultural Council. Monetary prizes will be awarded to first, second, and third-place winning entries. The requirements for entry into this competition can be found on the ACC website and by contacting the librarians for each of the schools in Agawam. If you have any questions, please contact Mary Jane Augusti at (413) 241-7196 or by email to: maryjane.augusti@gmail.com.

For more information on the activities and virtual offerings of the Agawam Cultural Council during the current pandemic stay-at-home order, please visit their web site, at: www.agawamcc.org.

The Agawam Cultural Council is an all-volunteer local partner of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, and is funded, in part, by the MCC. The ACC is charged with bringing engaging, entertaining, and educational events and opportunities in the arts, humanities, and sciences, to children and adults from Agawam and the surrounding communities.

UMassFive hosting winter coat drive

HADLEY – UMassFive College Federal Credit Union (UMassFive) is running a winter coat and cold-weather clothing drive in its Hadley and Northampton branches throughout the month of December. These donations are part of an effort to ensure that all community members have access to cold-weather clothing this winter, and will be distributed in partnership with the Amherst Survival Center.

“The public health and economic crises caused by COVID-19 have hit hard. Not only are many individuals and families struggling, but many of the resources our neighbors can turn to have had to shift their focus,” said Lev Ben-Ezra, Executive Director of the Amherst Survival Center. “Unfortunately, the Amherst Survival Center had to temporarily close our community store due to COVID as we focus on our food and nutrition programs, but we have remained committed to distributing core essentials-- items like coats, sleeping bags, underwear, socks and long

johns. We are so grateful to be partnering with a number of area organizations including Craig’s Doors and Family Outreach of Amherst to make sure every single coat, blanket, and winter accessory we collect makes it someone who needs it. Now is truly a time of ‘every bit counts,’ and we are grateful for all the ways the community is stepping up to support each other. The UMassFive coat drive is an essential part of that.”

UMassFive gratefully accepts any and all clean, new or gently used coats, gloves, scarves, hats, sweaters, and blankets.

Donations should be placed in a bag, and may be dropped off during business hours to the Hadley branch at 200 Westgate Center Drive or Northampton branch at 225 King Street.

<https://www.umassfive.coop/news/umassfive-hosting-winter-coat-drive-1>

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USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF TOP ROUND LONDON BROIL or ROAST **\$4.21** lb

USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY 80% LEAN GROUND BEEF **\$3.07** lb 7 lb. bag

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SPORTS

CROSS COUNTRY

Ross headed for UMass-Lowell

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

AGAWAM—The third week of November was very memorable for Agawam senior Sarah Ross, who's one of the best girl's high school cross-country runners in Massachusetts.

Ross capped off her outstanding high school cross-country career by capturing the Division 1 title with a time of 18:48.5 at the Massachusetts State Track Coaches Association Cup, which was held at Highland Park in Attleboro on Nov. 21.

"I love cross-country," Ross said. "It's a lot of work, but even on those days that you don't want to run, you know that you still have to do it because it's the only way you're going to improve. Every day is different and it's always inspiring to see your teammates running around you."

Two days earlier, Ross signed her National Letter of Intent to join the UMass Lowell cross-country and track & field teams. The River Hawks compete at the Division 1 level in both sports.

"UMass Lowell is definitely a perfect fit for me," Ross said.

"They have Bio Medical Engineering, which is the major I want to study. The head coach has been there a long time and the program has had a lot of success."

Gary Gardner has been coaching both the UMass Lowell cross-country and track & field teams for the past 19 years.

"I've gained a lot of trust in Coach Gardner since I first met him, and his runners improve every year. I know by going to UMass Lowell, I'll also continue to improve," Ross said. "I joined the Agawam cross-country team when I was a freshman and I always wanted to continue running in college."

The cross-country coach at Agawam High School is Kate Dever. The Brownies indoor track coach is Dan Pryce.

"All of my high school coaches have been very helpful to me," Ross said. "I've had a great experience here at Agawam High School. It's because of the great coaches and the great teammates that I've had around me. They've helped me get to this point."

When Ross was a freshman, the girls' cross-country team qualified for the state meet for

ROSS | page 9



Sarah Ross, an outstanding three-sport athlete, will run cross country and track for UMass-Lowell. SUBMITTED PHOTO

WRESTLING

Wrestling to be played in spring season

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – First it was outdoor "indoor" track, now could wrestling be moving outdoors?

Rather than cancel the high school wrestling season, the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association has voted to move wrestling to the spring season.

A "bubble" was placed between the winter and spring seasons to account for sports that were either shut down, or in the case of football and cheerleading, sports that were deemed high-risk to play during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

While there is optimism some restrictions will lift as the vaccine rolls out in the next few months, the MIAA is operating as through the pandemic conditions exist until they are otherwise guided by the state Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The EEA has been issuing the guidance high schools have been operating with. The guidance has included modified rules and protocols utilized to help keep students healthy while

WRESTLING | page 9

TRYOUTS

Pioneers look for roster hopefuls

Though the tryouts had to be more staggered with plenty of social distance, the Western Mass. Pioneers organization held tryouts prior to the Thanksgiving holiday for its many academy youth teams. Tryouts were held for numerous age groups for both boys and girls at Lusitano Field. The Pioneers are hopeful to have a normal regular season starting in the spring. PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHTOS.COM

A collage of five photographs from a youth soccer tryout session at night. The top photo shows a wide view of a soccer field with several players and coaches. Below it are four smaller photos: a young girl in a pink jacket and face mask kicking a ball; a player in a dark blue jersey with a face mask controlling a ball; a coach in a black jacket and face mask standing next to a young player in a pink jacket; and a player in an orange jersey kicking a ball.

Sports

ROSS ■ from page 8

the first time in the program’s history. The Brownies also made a return trip to the state meet, which was held at Stanley Park in Westfield, the following year.

Agawam’s home cross-country meets are held at Robinson Park.

“Robinson Park is a beautiful course to run,” Ross said. “It’s a hilly course, but there are always hills on most cross-country courses. You learn how to handle them.”

Because of COVID-19, the whole recruiting process for Ross was a little bit different than it normally would’ve been.

“The first time that I met the UMass Lowell assistant coach (Zach Nelson) was at the state indoor track meet last February. I met coach Gardner for the first time the following week at the New England meet,” Ross said. “Both of the coaches are very nice and I was in the process of scheduling a visit to the school, but then Coronavirus hit, which threw a wrench into those plans. The UMass Lowell coaches were great throughout all of the challenges.”

“This is a very exciting day for these three-outstanding student-athletes and their families,” said Agawam Mayor Bill Sapelli, who attended the signing ceremony. “These three girls have put in a lot of hard work and dedication to make it this far. You learn so many life lessons by playing a sport.”

The cross-country season at the collegiate level is held in the fall just like at Agawam High School.

Ross will also be a member of the UMass Lowell indoor track team in the winter and the outdoor track team in the spring.

Ross usually competes in the two-mile races during the indoor track season. She has competed in the one-mile races and is also a member of the 4X800 meter relay team.

Because she has been a member of the Brownies softball team, Ross will be competing during the outdoor track season for the first time at UMass Lowell.

“Running in all three seasons is probably going to be a little bit of an adjustment for me,” she said. “I think it will only help me to improve.”

Sarah’s father, David, was also a runner at Agawam High School. Her mother, Sandy, is also one of Sarah’s biggest supporters.

“My parents are very supportive of me,” she said. “It has been kind of special to be following in my father’s footsteps and it’s great to be sharing this passion with him. We’ve always been very close.”

WRESTLING ■ from page 8

also remaining on the athletic fields.

The EEA has advised against wrestling during the winter season due to the sport having “sustained close contact” between competitors.

With football already set to be played during the “bubble” season, the decision was made to try and have wrestling during the spring season.

With school gymnasiums being utilized for boys volleyball during the spring as well as the temperatures rising, the idea of hosting wrestling meets outdoors has been broached. It is unclear how that would look and what conditions spring athletes will compete under, but it would definitely be a first to hold wrestling meets outdoors. Meets typically take place in the center of a gymnasium on hard mats.

While it will more than likely be played during the bubble season, indoor track is also being talked about to be played outdoors due to the improving weather between February and April.

It is otherwise unclear how a change in seasons will affect already shrinking wrestling programs in the region. Many teams are having more and more trouble fielding full teams of at least 14 wrestlers, of which each one can fit into every weight class. With wrestling being competed in the spring, some schools could lose competitors to their regular spring sports, including lacrosse, baseball, tennis, and track. There also could be a lack of tournaments for individual wrestlers to compete in depending on how the region reacts to the sports movement to the spring.

There will be no winter tournaments for basketball and hockey. It is unknown whether spring sports will have tournaments played.

Wrestlers are allowed to have practices during the winter season.

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MIAA issues statement regarding status of winter sports

FRANKLIN – The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) COVID-19 Task Force representatives today presented winter sport modifications and recommendations for the 2020-2021 season to the MIAA Board of Directors.

This presentation culminated a two-week MIAA governance process which included sport-specific sub-committee meetings where updated Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and current Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary (DESE) guidelines were reviewed. These subcommittees created sport-specific modifications and presented them to the full committees for approval. The MIAA Sports Medicine Committee (SMC) and ultimately the MIAA Covid-19 Task force subsequently approved the modifications.

MIAA Executive Director Bill Gaine stated, “The MIAA’s mission can be defined by a dual prescription: promoting maximum participation opportunities for the maximum number of student-athletes so that life lessons can be learned. At the same time, promoting the health and safety of all participants is the Association’s imperative.”

The MIAA Board of Directors voted to approve sport-specific modifications for the Winter Season. These modifications will continue to be reviewed as they relate to current regulations surrounding COVID-19 and may be modified if necessary. Additional modifications or the decision to participate in MIAA-recognized winter sports will be determined by local school districts and/or their local Board of Health. You may view the Task Force presentation on the MIAA website.

Highlights include:

The Winter Season will have a new start date of December 14, 2020.

Modifications for the sports of Wrestling, Indoor Track, winter Cheerleading and Dance were not created or presented due to committee recommendation for those sports to be moved to a different sport season. Indoor Track is moved to the Fall II Season and Wrestling, winter Cheerleading and Dance are moved to the Spring Season.

MIAA President and Marshfield Superintendent Jeff Granatino said, “It is great to see that so many of our student-athletes will be able to take part in the sports they love this winter. Many coaches, athletic directors, principals and superintendents worked hard over the past few weeks to ensure that we would be able to offer interscholastic athletes for our students, and I want to thank them for their efforts.”

Granatino added, “The pandemic has reshaped the way education is delivered across the country and the same can be said about its impact on athletics. Nonetheless, I am confident our student-athletes and coaches will adjust to the new expectations this winter and have an experience as fulfilling and as exciting as what we saw during the fall season. Gaine reinforced, “Our membership should be proud that our Board’s actions today reflect allegiance to the MIAA mission.”

The approved Winter Season sport modifications are located on the MIAA COVID-19 Task Force Page. The Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) document located on the Task Force page is currently being updated to better reflect and provide clarity with recent decisions. This will be posted as soon as possible.

HoopHall event cancelled, to return in 2022

SPRINGFIELD — The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame announced today the cancellation of the 2021 Spalding Hoophall Classic presented by Eastbay. The annual basketball showcase entering its 20th year at Springfield College, the birthplace of basketball, is typically played during MLK Weekend.

“We’re obviously extremely disappointed to cancel Hoophall Classic, a premiere event in the high school basketball calendar,” said Greg Procino, Vice President of Basketball Operations for the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. “The event has seen tremendous talent and success over the past two decades, with a number of sell-out crowds, but ultimately the safety of our fans, student

athletes and staff is of the utmost importance. We thank Springfield and our marketing partners for their support over the years and look forward to returning to Blake Arena when it’s safe to do so.”

The Basketball Hall of Fame plans to relaunch the elite high school event in 2022. For the latest updates as they become available, follow @hoophallclassic on Instagram and Twitter.

The HoopHall event has featured many games featuring area high school teams, including South Hadley, Holyoke, Minnechaug, Chicopee, Chicopee Comprehensive, South Hadley, Agawam, and Granby during its history.

Senior photos from fall season wanted

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

The fall season is nearing its end and Turley Publications has been all over the action.

But with this unpredictable season there have been temporary or in some cases, permanent stoppages in play, and we still want to help feature your athletes, especially those who are seniors this year.

We continue to ask for help on this season in order to bring the best coverage we can possibly manage

and fill our pages with names and color.

We know that fans will be limited to the home crowds, but that is where you all come in.

If you attended any senior games and would like to see those photos in our papers, we welcome submitted photos from those events and information about graduating seniors who participated in Fall 1 sports.

We also welcome any additional information about other major achievements. Send any and all information and photos for inclusion to sports@turley.com.



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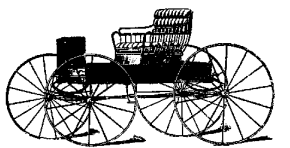
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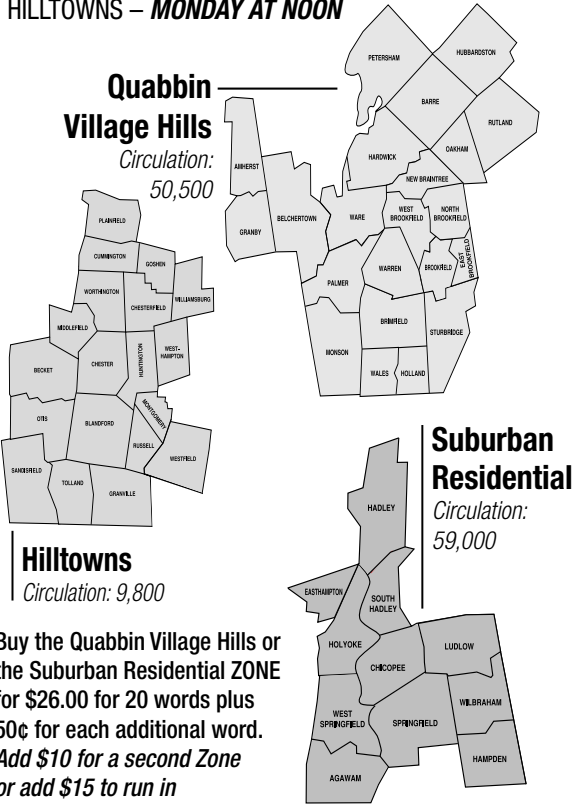
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Public Notices

AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Agawam Conservation Commission will hold a **remote** public hearing due to the COVID19 pandemic on **Thursday, December 10, 2020 at 6:30 PM** online via Zoom. The purpose of this hearing will be to hear the Notice of Intent of Aspenwood Associates LLC for work to be performed (subdivision) at 0 Silver Street and 0 Doane Avenue, subject to the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act. Interested parties can contact the Conservation Commission at pkerr@agawam.ma.us for more information, to provide written comments prior to the meeting or attend via the following:

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By Order of
Henry A. Kozloski, Chairman
AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION
12/03/2020

AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Agawam Conservation Commission will hold a **remote** public hearing due to the COVID19 pandemic on **Thursday, December 10, 2020 at 6:00 PM** online via Zoom. The purpose of this hearing will be to hear the Notice of Intent of Gilbert for work to be performed (addition to single family home) at 727 River Road, subject to the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act. Interested parties can contact the Conservation Commission

at pkerr@agawam.ma.us for more information, to provide written comments prior to the meeting or attend via the following:

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By Order of Henry A. Kozloski, Chairman
AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION
12/03/2020

AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION LEGAL AD

The Agawam Conservation Commission will meet **remotely**, due to the COVID -19 restrictions, through Zoom at **6:15 PM on Thursday, December 10, 2020**. The purpose of this meeting will be to hear the application of Eversource for a Request for Determination of Applicability for their 1768 Line Maintenance Project that is located from the Mass./Conn. State line to the South Agawam Substation off of Shoemaker Lane.

By Order of
Henry A. Kozloski, Chairman
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WITNESS, Hon. BARBARA M. HYLAND, Esquire, First Justice of said Court at Springfield, the thirtieth day of November two thousand and twenty.

Suzanne T. Seguin
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LEGAL AD AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION LEGAL AD

The Agawam Conservation Commission will

meet remotely, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, through **Zoom at 6:45 PM on Thursday, December 10, 2020**. The purpose of this meeting will be to hear the application of MassDOT for a Request for Determination of Applicability for herbicide application on Route 57.

By Order of
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Turley Publications Inc. publishes 15 weekly newspapers throughout Western Massachusetts. Visit www.turley.com for more information.

Obituary

Richard R. LeMay

AGAWAM – Richard R. LeMay, 83, passed away on November 17, 2020 at Baystate Medical Center. Born in Springfield, MA on February 13, 1937, he was the son of the late Albert and Catherine (LaRoche) LeMay.

He was employed at Pratt and Whitney Aircraft for over 30 years, before retiring in 1993. For many years, he was also an active member of Magawa Sporting Club in Agawam.

To cherish his memory Richard leaves his loving wife of over 50 years, Patricia (Woods) LeMay of Agawam, his sons Richard LeMay Jr and Michael LeMay, M.D. and was predeceased by his daughter Susan (LeMay) Clark. His grandchildren William and Katherine Clark (Susan), Christopher and Amanda (Richard) and Christopher and Megan (Michael) were a very wonderful part of his life.

Richard was one of 10 children (7 boys and 3 girls) and unfortunately, only his sister Theresa Szczpanski of Ludlow is the only survivor. He will also be missed by many nieces and nephews who he has dearly cherished and loved and by numerous special friends with whom he spent many happy times and shared wonderful memories.

Memorial contributions in Richard's memory may be made to Shriner's Hospital for Children, 516 Carew Street, Springfield, MA 01104. For more information or to leave an online condolence, please visit www.forastiere.com



Agawam Advertiser News

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Schools

Agawam High School Counseling Bulletin

Visiting College Representatives: If you are interested in meeting with College or University Representatives that will be conducting virtual visits at our school, you must sign up in Naviance at least one day in advance. Google Meet or Zoom links will be provided when you sign up.

Reminders:

Members of the Class of 2021 should familiarize themselves with the information that has been posted to the Post-Secondary Planning section under the Counseling tab of the High School webpage. Most recently, the Senior College Application Packet was added, which is a great resource for students interested in applying to two- and four-year colleges. https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/937652/Senior_Application_Packet_2020-2021.pdf

The COVID-19 pandemic has created uncertainty among students and families about nearly all aspects of the college admission process, including the role of standardized testing. We were scheduled to host testing in November, but did not feel it was prudent to have students from "red" area and states in our building. We looked into hosting school day testing for just Agawam students, but the next available date is in March. Due to the cancellation of SAT and ACT testing dates, more than 1,630 US colleges and universities announced they are moving to a test-optional policy, and more will surely follow. By going test-optional, institutions are making a definitive statement that they will not need test scores to make admission decisions this year. Despite the change in policies, high school students and their parents are asking, "Does test optional really mean test optional?" The answer, simply put, is: YES.

Please keep in mind that some colleges may require SAT or ACT scores for certain majors and/or the awarding of merit money. We encourage you to contact any schools that are of interest to you (website, email, or phone) to confirm that test scores are not required for your intended major and/or the awarding of merit money.

All students should be checking their Naviance accounts on a regular basis. There is so much valuable information for all students, whether you're headed directly into the work force, the military, or college upon graduation from AHS. If you can't access your account, please be in touch with your School Counselor.

Open Houses/Informational Sessions/Discovery Days:

Colleges and universities will be hosting information and recruitment events, in a variety of formats, in the next couple of months. Check the colleges' websites for more information and to confirm the date and time of the event. While campus visits may look and feel different during this time, it is important to take advantage of these programs to learn as much as you can about the schools that are of interest to you.

Scholarship Information:

See your counselor or visit the websites below for more information or an application.

Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC): This scholarship program offers students the opportunity to earn their degree and receive valuable leadership and management skills while enjoying the benefits of an exciting career. Several requirements exist. The deadline for submitting an application is December 31, 2020. Please visit public.navy.mil for details.

Exceptional student leaders are invited

to apply for the 2021 GE-Reagan Foundation Scholarship Program. In honor of the legacy and character of President Ronald Reagan, this program annually rewards up to 20 college-bound students who demonstrate exemplary leadership, drive, integrity, and citizenship with \$10,000 renewable scholarships (up to \$40,000 per recipient). More information is available at reagan-foundation.org. Applications will be accepted online until January 5, 2021.

The 2020 Profile in Courage Essay will be offering a first place prize of \$10,000, a second place prize of \$3,000, and \$1,000 for five finalists. The maximum word count is 1,000 with a minimum of 700, not including citations and bibliographies. The deadline for submission is January 15, 2021. More information is available at jfklibrary.org/essaycontest

Berkshire Bank's NeXt Gen Scholarship Program is now accepting applications for the 2020-2021 cycle. Through the program, 40 students will receive a \$2500 scholarship. These will be awarded to students who have exemplified community service through their volunteer efforts, have been successful academically, and have financial need. The application deadline is January 31, 2021. Learn more at berkshirebank.com/scholarships

Big Y Scholarship applications will be accepted through February 1, 2021. The program awards over 300 scholarships each year, totaling more than \$250,000. All Big Y Scholarships recognize academic merit and achievement. Applications are available only online at bigy.com.

Tenaska, founded in 1987, is a privately held energy company committed to being good neighbors in the communities where its plants are located. To express that commitment, scholarships are offered through the high schools located in the counties

with plant operations (Berkshire Power Company in our area). Applicants must be a 2021 graduating high school senior who plan to attend a two- or four-year post-secondary education program at an accredited institution. The scholarship amount is \$1500, and applications, which are available at Tenaska.com/scholarship-form, are due no later than February 12, 2021.

The Asian Pacific Community Fund (APCF) has multiple scholarship awards to give to eligible high school seniors. The application on the website is not yet open, but is expected to go live on November 20. Applications are due no later than Friday, April 2, 2021. More information is available at apcf.org/scholarships

The American College Foundation (ACF) is offering a Visionary Scholarship, with multiple winners selected to each receive between \$1,000 and \$5,000. The application process is quick and easy and financial need is not considered. All may apply. The application is available at AmericanCollegeFoundation.org and the deadline is May 1, 2021.

The Wisegeek Entrepreneurship Matters Scholarship is a \$500 scholarship open to students with an entrepreneurial spirit. While not required, the program will look for candidates with a track record of overcoming challenges and a penchant for continuous growth. Applications can be completed in less than two minutes and are due by May 1, 2021.

wise-geek.com/entrepreneurship-matters-scholarship.htm

The creators of the "Student Award Search Aid" website are offering the B. Davis Scholarship for 2021. Please visit studentawardsearch.com/scholarships.htm to read about the program and to apply for the scholarship. The amount of the award is \$1,000 and the deadline is May 24, 2021.

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